

Introduction

*atho khalv āhuḥ kāma-maya evāyaṁ puruṣa iti |
sa yathā-kāmo bhavati tat-kratur bhavati ||
yat-kratur bhavati tat karma kurute |
yat karma kurute tad abhisāṁpadyate ||*

“And so people say: ‘A person here consists simply of desire.’
A man resolves in accordance with his desire,
acts in accordance with his resolve,
and turns out to be in accordance with his action.”¹

This short passage from the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka-upaniṣad* 4.4.5 outlines the pivotal phases of action: desire, which is its beginning, the decision to undertake efforts in order to fulfil the desire, the effort itself and, finally, the fulfilment of the desire with its ontological results caused by the final attainment of the desired object. It is the action, which transforms one’s desire into what one is.

Such a way of thinking about action is continued and elaborated in the ancient Indian theory of theatre formulated by the *Nāṭya-śāstra* and its commentators. It was Professor Maria Krzysztof Byrski, who recognised the crucial link between the concept of action in the classical Indian theatre and in the Veda (Byrski 1973, 1997).

Indian theatre presents reality as it is. Reality – as it is seen by the Veda – is Brahman manifesting itself as the dynamic and multiple world. The way Brahman manifests itself is conceived in terms of the sacrifice (*yajña*). In the macrocosmic perspective *yajña* is the model of the world, in the microcosmic perspective it is the model of every particular action. This model sees action as divided into phases similar to those mentioned in the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka-upaniṣad*. The dynamism of the world causes the chasm between the subject and the objects. The experience of this chasm is the root of the desire, which is the first phase of action. Then effort comes, followed by its continuation, disruption and final completion (Byrski 1973, 1997).

During each performance of *Nāṭya*, concrete actions of human beings epitomise this model of action. The audience is confronted with the ideal that can be intellectually and

¹ Olivelle 1998: 121.

emotionally internalised through the concreteness of what is going on on the stage. The aim of a performance is the same as the aim of *yajña* – the realisation of the ultimate unity of reality, which transcends the dynamic multiplicity of the world. On the emotional level the audience of a performance takes part in the actions enacted on the stage to finally experience the bliss of Fullness – impossible without the whole process which precedes it (Byrski 1973, 1997).

In the light of the above, Professor Byrski analyses the concept of plot (*iti-vṛtta*) as regarding its three schemas, which are the five stages of action (*kāryāvasthā*), the fivefold nature of the matter (*artha-prakṛti*) and the five junctures (*saṁdhi*) of the plot.

The five stages of action (*kāryāvasthās*) structure the action from the general point of view of a doer who aims at the achievement of a fruit. They express the abstract and general scenario of any action, emphasising its linear and temporal character (Byrski 1973: 113-114). The action unfolds from its beginning characterised by a desire (*autsukya*), through the stages of effort, hope for fulfilment of the desire, and doubts if the final attainment of the desired object is possible. The concept of the fivefold nature of the matter (*artha-prakṛti*) puts the abstract scenario of a successful action expressed in five *kāryāvasthās* on the level of practice, focusing on the way the action is performed and on its continuous character (Byrski 1973: 114-115). In order to explain the difference between these two schemes of action, Professor Byrski, following the ancient authorities, evokes the idea of a plant, saying that while *kāryāvasthās* are the vertebrae of the plot, *artha-prakṛtis* are its flesh (Byrski 1973: 133-134). The five junctures (*saṁdhi*), the phases corresponding to the phases of the five stages of action, give structure to the body of the plot and make it a consistent and living whole of a given artistic composition (Byrski 1973: 134ff).

We decided to make use of these ideas in the arrangement of the present volume. Its content is, therefore, divided into five parts named after the five *kāryāvasthās*. In the part headed the Beginning (*ārambha*) we gathered the articles discussing literature, in the part entitled Effort (*yatna*) articles focusing on religion and philosophy are grouped, the part headed Hope (*prāpty-āśā*) deals with modern languages, the Obstacle part (*niyatāpti*) includes articles on politics, and the part headed Result (*phalāgama*) discusses the theatre and film.

The volume divided into the parts mentioned above refers to twofold action. Firstly, in this way the development of Indian culture, which begins (*ārambha*) with literature, is presented; *yatna* is its religion and philosophy, *prāpty-āśā* is the hope for its modernity, *niyatāpti* is political affairs and *phalāgama* is the theatre and film integrating all the previous stages, both in ancient and modern times. Secondly, in the same way we may structuralise Professor Byrski's passions and actions. They encompass all the phases of Indian culture enumerated above but at the same time they go beyond them: Professor Byrski is not only occupied with literature, religion, modern Indian languages, politics and the theatre, but they are also the texture of his life and of his efforts to understand and organise the world he lives in.

The stages of any action are not as sharply distinguished as is implied by the concept of *avasthās* (Byrski 1973). The same is the case with the process of the development of culture and of human life. In the Indian classical theory of theatre, the idea of the constant actualisation of what is potential in the process, of its continuity and lack of isolation from other acting subjects and things, is expressed through the concept of the fivefold nature of the matter (*artha-prakṛti*, Byrski 1973, 1997). In the present volume, this continuity of the process is reflected in the fact that in many cases the issues discussed in the articles go beyond the strict division of the parts. Our division of the contents of this volume content into five parts is as schematic as the division of a long and complex action into a linear scheme of five *avasthās*.

I. The Beginning (*ārambha*)

This part includes the articles dealing with literature. The initial character of this part is based on several grounds. Firstly, here are articles, which discuss the most ancient Indian texts: the *Ṛg-veda*, the epic literature, the *kāvya* literature, and ancient Tamil poetry. Secondly, these articles point to the characteristic feature of Indian culture which had its origins in most ancient times: continuity of concepts, reinterpretation of motives, intertextuality, the oral character of literature and its close relation to religion – both from the point of view of the way it is composed and what it expresses.

Tatiana Y. Elizarenkova discusses the meaning of *vṛka* ('wolf') in the *Ṛg-veda*. Her synchronic analysis reveals the deep primordial human fear of a wolf – the embodiment of danger. She also shows the problems of understanding some *Ṛg-vedic* stanzas, the context for which can be found only in a diachronic search in the field of Indo-European linguistic and conceptual parallels.

Joanna Jurewicz presents the fundamental role of the *Ṛg-veda* as the conceptual ground for the later Indian culture. She demonstrates that the basic semantic range of the notion of *artha* was already established in the *Ṛg-veda* where *ārtha* was a general notion expressing the various aspects of the action of human beings and of the whole world.

Mary Brockington deals with the process of the composition of oral epic text. She demonstrates how the *Rāmāyaṇa* was reworked during its long-lasting composition and the way its composers managed to harmonise faithfulness to its general layout with the new demands of changing times. Thanks to this, the *Rāmāyaṇa* could remain affectively and intellectually appealing to the subsequent generations of listeners.

John Brockington shows how the process of rationalisation affects the content of oral text during its composition, taking as an example the rationalisation of the etymological meaning of Sītā's name. He demonstrates that the idea of a furrow as her birth-place gradually appeared in the *Rāmāyaṇa* in the later stages of its composition.

Joanna Sachse deals with the problem of the literary composition of the *Mahā-bhārata*, placing it in the broader context of ancient Greek and Roman literature. She discusses

the main principle of composing the description of the battle, which is to postpone the decisive duel between two main heroes: Arjuna and Karna.

Alexander Dubyanskiy focuses on two issues connected with the composition of oral text in ancient Tamil heroic literature. He demonstrates the ritual dimension of this process and the role of reinterpretation and the development of oral formulae in making poems meet the artistic requirements of the audience.

Barbara Grabowska presents how the same story is retold in Indian culture during its development, assuming new shapes and expressing new meanings, and how it goes beyond literature to become a part of religious beliefs. She presents transformations of the motif of Subhadrā's abduction, beginning with the *Mahā-bhārata* and ending with modern Bengali literature and Subhadrā's cult in the Jagannātha temple in Puri.

The retelling of a literary motif also characterises Tamil literature, which can be seen from the paper of Joanna Kusio who analyses the motif of *kāmanōy*, 'love-sickness'. Concentrating upon the *kuṛavañci* literature, she demonstrates how literary motifs merge with religious ideas: the liminal state, in which the young heroine finds herself, having seen the god or king, is a manifestation of her divine energy (*aṇaṅku*) which marks the attainment of puberty.

The durability guaranteed by constant renewal characterises not only literary motifs and tales but also theoretical literary concepts. Lidia Sudyka focuses on the history of the literary ideal of *abhisārika* – the heroine who goes to meet her lover. Formulated in the *Nāṭya-śāstra*, it was adapted, reformulated and developed in the Sanskrit, Hindi and Muslim literary theories.

The article by Anna Trynkowska concerns the more general issue of the history of literature, i.e. the possibility of the identification of the stanzas found in Sanskrit anthologies. She proposes criteria helpful in establishing the authorship of a stanza and the text to which it belongs: not only should linguistic, stylistic and metrical factors be taken into account, but also the consistency of the text into which a stanza is supposed to be inserted. The method adopted by Anna Trynkowska allows her to falsify the hypothesis of Ludwik Sternbach ascribing several stanzas from the anthologies to Māgha's *Śīsupāla-vadha*.

The article, which deals with the beginnings of the Polish studies on the Sanskrit language and literature, is also included in the initial part of the present volume. Małgorzata Wielińska-Soltwedel presents the life and work of Walenty Skorochód Majewski, the precursor of Polish Indology, who lived at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries and who began the *guru-paramparā* of Polish scholars devoting their lives to the study of Indian culture.

II. Effort (*yatna*)

Religion and philosophy are great efforts of humanity which aim at explaining reality against the metaphysical background and at creating a system of norms that allows

people to behave in accordance with what they believe. Religion is also an effort to get into contact with the sacred, taken both individually and collectively, by communities. These two kinds of effort are the core of Indian culture, underlying and fostering all its aspects.

Patrick Olivelle discusses the idea of religious walking and its various actual expressions, beginning with the Vedic concept of *brahma-cārin* and ending with contemporary pilgrims and the idea of dying on the road. Religion is seen here as a strenuous effort (*śrama*) in search of God and a constant crossing of the border between the everyday profane world and the sacred, liminal sphere.

The idea of religion understood as contact with liminality is also presented in the article of Natalia Świdzińska. She demonstrates how the cult of local heroes begins, assuming their liminal character as the basic criterion for their deification. The telling example she uses is the deification of a local guru, Caṅkili Caṇṇiyāci (The Ascetic with a Chain) from northern Tamil Nadu.

Religion can be viewed not only from the perspective of the believers but also from the perspective of those who are responsible for its ideology. Their effort is a reinterpretation understood as the adoption of various (diachronic and synchronic) concepts both to show the conformity with different intellectual strands and to undertake a debate with them. A similar reinterpretation takes place in philosophical thinking.

Marzenna Czerniak-Drożdżowicz presents the efforts of philosophers and religious teachers of the *pāñca-rātra* movement to prove their conformity with the orthodoxy expressed in the great Brāhmaṇic texts such as the *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Manu-smṛti*. She takes as an example their reinterpretation of the word *dharma*.

Przemysław Szczurek analyses the important śloka of the *Bhagavad-gītā* 6.5-6 and contrasts them with their earlier (Upaniṣadic) and contemporary context, both the orthodox (Brāhmaṇic) and the heterodox (especially Buddhist) ones. He demonstrates that these parts of the *Bhagavad-gītā* can be seen as born in the debate with Buddhism. The aim of this debate was to give an alternative ethical solution, more attractive than the Buddhist one.

Johannes Bronkhorst focuses on the problem of the adoption of philosophical concepts originating from non-orthodox strands by the Brāhmaṇic thinkers and the reasons why it was done. He shows how the philosophers of the Mīmāṃsa and the Vaiśeṣika, in order to introduce and propagate their own solutions, adopted the ideas of the *ājīvikas*.

Marek Mejor concentrates on the close connection between the literary and religious imagination. He analyses the passages of the *Śīsupāla-vadha* of Māgha, which refer to Buddhist ideas in their similes. Thus he shows that not only Māgha himself but also his audience must have been well versed in the religious thought of their time, otherwise such a literary strategy would be futile and deprived of its artistic and explanatory power.

Finally, Jacek Bolewski SJ goes beyond the Indian ground and analyses the idea of cosmogonic sacrifice in Indian and Christian thought in the light of René Girard's theory of sacrifice. Thus he opens a way to comparative research on Hinduism and Christianity.

III. Hope for the Future Result (*prāpty-āśā*)

If one sees the development of a culture as a purposeful process, its modern form is the result of this process. Since the present volume focuses on culture expressed in language, we can treat modern languages as the result at which such development aims.

Artur Karp tackles the problem of the etymology of the honorific *jī*. He not only proposes a possible etymon, but also poses the general question of how one should proceed while looking for the etymology of a word: not only phonological factors are relevant here but also collocations of forms which are candidates for the etymon.

The development of script is an important part of language development. Elżbieta Walter discusses the problems with the Bengali script which is a copy of the *devanāgarī* script, demonstrating serious difficulties, which arise when a script is adapted for a language and not invented especially for it.

Jacek Woźniak presents the inadequacy of the very basic linguistic category of “language” in the case of languages with long histories, disparity between their written and spoken variants, the variety of spoken variants and the lack of a generally accepted convention for writing spoken variants. He discusses the problems with the definition of the Tamil language, emphasising their practical importance for the teachers.

Monika Browarczyk deals with modern Hindi literature, focusing on comic works. She analyses the way, in which authors achieved comic effects, not only on the linguistic level, but also by reinterpretation – in this case a comic one – of the old tradition, and by breaking taboos. Liminality – a deadly serious matter in religion – becomes a matter for laughter in comic works.

IV. The Appearance of Obstacle (*niyatāpti*)

As Professor Byrski interprets it, the *niyatāpti* should be understood not as the phase in which the result (*āpti*) is certain but as the phase in which the result is suppressed and doubts about its attainment appear (Byrski 1973: 104ff). On the archetypal plane of *yajñā*, this phase is realised by the *daivāsura* – the conflict between gods and demons over a value, which discontinues the action and which have to be overcome (Byrski 1973: 76ff). In the present volume, this phase of action is represented by the politics, the core of which are conflicts and their solutions.

Friedrich Wilhelm concentrates upon the ideal sphere of norms which should govern the life of a king – the main politician in ancient India. The ordered life of the king allowed him to harmonise his activities in such a way that he could effectively rule the country. Interestingly enough, a similar harmony should characterise the man-about-town and the poet.

The next two articles deal with real conflicts. Jan Kieniewicz presents three phases of Indo-Portuguese relationship which are Contact, Encounter and Conquest and which can be seen as the successive phases of the *daivāsura*, the value of which is, on the one

hand, the realisation of one's economic interests and, on the other hand, the preservation of one's culture. The author shows the stages of the conflict, beginning with the inefficiency of the efforts of the Portuguese in the phase of Contact to the breakdown of the Indian social system in the phase of Conquest.

Anna Sieklucka shows the real face of conflict. She analyses Hindi and Panjabi short stories devoted to the Partition. The value of this conflict is the chastity of women treated as a symbol of the honour of men. The ultimate losers in this conflict are – contrary to the Brāhmaṇic description of the *daivāsuraṃ* – all its participants, the ultimate victims are women.

V. Obtainment of the Result (*phalāgama*)

Indian theatre is the domain in which all the issues discussed above find its place. The text of a play is a literary composition, its content concerns all the actions of human beings on the emotional, religious, intellectual and social levels. The theatre goes back to the most ancient layers of Indian culture in order to refresh itself, adorn it in beautiful shapes, make it meaningful and tell the audience once again the universal story about themselves materialised in the performance of the actors.

Natalia Lidova focuses on the history of ancient Indian theatre. She demonstrates that the etymology and uses of the Sanskrit terms *prayoga* and *nāṭya*, which can be traced back to the *Ṛg-veda*, reveal the connection between the earlier forms of Indian theatre and the ritual battle performance. She reconstructs the chronology of the theatrical performance (*nāṭya*), pantomime (*ṇṛtya*) and dance (*ṇṛtta*).

Bożena Śliwczynska in her detailed description of the *purappāṭu*, the introductory segment of the Kūṭiyāṭṭam theatre tradition, presents the ritual dimension of the scenic activity during which the gods are invoked to be present on stage and to be worshipped. The *purappāṭu* opens and sanctifies further segments of the performance.

Danuta Stasik tackles the issue of the reinterpretation of tradition in modern times, demonstrating how the story of Rāma is adopted by Viśvanāth Simh, the author of the first drama in the Hindi ramaite tradition, and how the invention of the author is interwoven with the conventions of the Sanskrit theatrical tradition and the influences of indigenous quasi-religious, quasi-folk performances (*rām-līlā*, *ras-līlā*).

Aleksandra Szyszko focuses on the reinterpretation of the folk tradition. She discusses the motif of love of Dholā and Mārū which is widespread in the oral tradition of Rājasthān, both Hindu and Muslim, showing its vitality and adaptability for various literary and theatrical genres.

Modern technology is of much help in preserving and editing manuscripts. Heidrun Brückner reports the progress of the work on the manuscripts of the dramas ascribed to Bhāsa (the Würzburg Multimedia Databank project), emphasising its importance for our knowledge of the manuscript and performance traditions of the Sanskrit theatre in South India.

The influence of classical Indian theatre, of its theoretical assumptions and its performances, goes beyond India. Zbigniew Osiński shows the Indian inspirations of Jerzy Grotowski in his idea of an actor who is seen as a dancing god, of a performance being a unity of music, dance and singing, and of a spectacle becoming the ritual of initiation.

Finally, two articles discuss the role of film which has nowadays, to a large extent, replaced the theatre in the case of the non-elite audience, having become “the Kaliyugi avatara of Sanskrit drama”.² Both show the close connection between film and politics, which mutually affect each other.

Krzysztof Dębicki, emphasising the role of film as the medium, which reinforces both traditional Indian values and aesthetic conventions, focuses on the role of the hero understood in terms of guru and god who brings the world back to its order and who has real influence on politics and everyday life.

Maria Skakuj Puri shows how film expresses dramatic aspects of the human condition, channels emotions and gives voice to mute victims of politics which – in this case – are women mentally and physically violated during the Partition – the *daivāsura* of the Kaliyuga times.

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Thus, in honour of Professor Maria Krzysztof Byrski, *iti-vṛtta of theatrum mirabiliorum Indiae Orientalis* has been composed. The papers tackle many facets of Indian reality, which, like in crystal, converge in the present volume to display the ideal beauty and richness of the culture to which Professor Byrski has devoted his passions and activities and which he made a meaningful part of his life.

Joanna Jurewicz

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² This is the title of Byrski 1980.